



PTA POST

everychild. onevoice.

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October 2002

From The President

What an outstanding attendance we had at Great Expectations and the Great Exchange. I hope each of the over 350 PTA leaders who attended left with new ideas, new friends, and renewed energy.

This month the theme of the PTA Post is Parent Involvement. Research indicates that the best predictor of student success is parent involvement. But what kind of parent involvement are we talking about? According to the research by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, the most effective means of parent involvement is active rather than passive. Examples of active involvement are: working directly with your child on homework, helping with field trips, volunteering in the classroom, and taking an active interest in school activities. The research also supports the fact that the impact of parent involvement is greater earlier in the child's educational experience.

Your PTA unit is a critical liaison between parents and the schools. There are many resources available to help PTAs develop effective parent involvement programs. See our best practices article provided by the Wildwood Forest PTA. Their School-Family Contract encourages the kind of "active" involvement that is so effective. Also, please note the availability of the *Building Successful Partnerships* resource for developing effective parent involvement programs from the National PTA website (www.pta.org).

The Wake County PTA Council's Parent Involvement Committee is in the process of developing a series of parent workshops and roundtables. These workshops will provide opportunities for parents to speak one on one with administrators, as well as parent help sessions. More information on these sessions will be available soon.

Thank you for the leadership you are providing to the parents of Wake County. Your efforts are appreciated.

Paula Lipford
President

Dates and Events

October

24th — County Commissioners
Candidates Forum
Martin Middle School – 7 pm

December

10th – President's Reception
Full Council Meeting
time/place TBA

January

17th – Deadline for Reflections
Entries

January – February

Parent Education Workshops
offered in various locations
dates/times/places TBA

March

25th – Reflections Reception
Full Council Meeting
and Election of Officers
time/place TBA

April

22nd – Awards Celebration
Full Council Meeting
time/place TBA

May

2nd-3rd — State PTA Convention
North Raleigh Hilton
31st – Project Graduation
Dorton Arena

June

22nd-24th – National PTA Convention
Charlotte

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Reflections 2002-2003 *this year's theme is "Signs of Courage..."*

The Reflections Program is a National PTA competition that encourages students from K-12 to complete a theme in one of four categories: photography, music composition, literature, and visual arts. These are then broken down into grade level divisions. There are several steps in this competition beginning at the school level and ending at the national level. Only a maximum of twenty works can represent the school at the county level. The ones receiving first place then compete at the District level. From there, the first place works are sent to the state; state first place winners are then sent to the nationals.

The Reflections packet comes in the NC PTA President's packet. Please make sure the Reflections Committee Chairperson has received this vital information! The rules for students' participation, entry forms, and helpful information is included in the packet. More information from Council will be sent via courier, including rules and entry forms in Spanish.

2004-2005 theme entries will be due on Friday, November 15, 2002. Note: the winning theme entry submitted this year would be used two years from now. Each local unit PTA must create a school deadline for the theme entries. Allow enough time to get your school's entries to NC PTA. You may mail them or hand deliver them to NC PTA, 3501 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, NC 27612, or fax them to: 787-0569.

The 2003-2004 theme will be "I am really happy when..."

Your Reflections Committee will also need to make a deadline for this year's Reflections entries. Allow enough time for the entries to be judged. Some schools are collecting entries before Winter Break, while others are waiting until the first week back from Break. **The Wake County PTA Council deadline is Friday, January 17, 2003.** Please make sure all entries have followed the guidelines set by the National PTA in each category! You will need to have judges determine the top entries. **Each school may only submit a total of 20 entries.**

The tentative date for the Wake County PTA Council Reflections Reception is Tuesday, March 25, 2003. More information will be given at a later date.

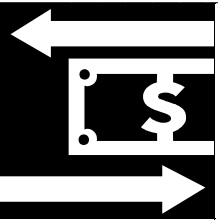
THE WAKE PTA COUNCIL IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO CHAIR THE TWO REFLECTIONS COMMITTEES. If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer to help the Council, please contact Beth Slate, 303-8833, or email: bethslate@sprintmail.com

Paid Your Dues?

You should have already received your Invoice for Wake County PTA Council dues. Your prompt return with payment is much appreciated.

If you have questions please contact Jill Touchberry, Council Treasurer, at jtouchberr@cs.com or 676-1972.

Thank you for your support of Council activities!



NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

In 1967, the National PTA created and adopted the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs (National PTA, 1998a) to be used in support of establishing parent involvement programs. Each standard addresses a different type of parent involvement:

- Communicating** – Communication between home and schools is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
- Parenting** – Parenting skills are promoted and supported
- Student Learning** – Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning
- Volunteering** – Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.
- School Decision Making and Advocacy** – Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
- Collaborating with the Community** – Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

The National PTA provides a guide for developing quality parent involvement programs that work. This resource focuses on ways to implement the six National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs.

Building Successful Partnerships: A Guide for Developing Parent and Family Involvement Programs is available from the National PTA's website www.pta.org.

— from *Building Successful Partnerships: A Guide for Developing Parent and Family Involvement Programs*, National Education Service, Bloomington, Indiana, 2000, pg. 4.



What Kind of Meeting Is This?

Executive Board? Executive Committee? What is the difference? When do they meet and who comes to the meetings? It is important to know the answers to these questions so that your PTA is following their bylaws and also being a productive and effective PTA.

The executive committee, which consists of the elected officers and the principal (or designee), is responsible for the **planning** part of your PTA and transacts emergency business between executive board meetings. Meetings are held as needed.

The executive board consists of the elected officers, the school principal (or designee) and the chairs of the standing committees. They are the **managing** part of your PTA who approve the plan of work for officers, chairs and committees. The executive board directs the affairs of your PTA in the interval between your general membership meetings. Chairmen of your standing committees are an integral part of your PTA and are included in your regular executive board meetings. As a chair of a standing committee, they have a vote at your executive board meetings and should be reporting on their committee's work. Regular meetings of the executive board are to be held during the year and the board at its first meeting of the year determines those meeting dates.

Check your bylaws to determine when meetings of your entire general membership are held. If your PTA does not have a current copy of your approved bylaws, please contact the NC State PTA in Raleigh at 787-0534 or e-mail them at office@ncpta.org.

Doreen Burke
District 3 Director, NC State PTA
burke303@aol.com or 469-3051 (home)

Educate and Involve

Parent Education is a great opportunity to involve parents and it accomplishes two goals. First and foremost, it fulfills the main mission of the PTA, which is to educate our members and strengthens the bond between school and parent. Secondly, it provides a chance for parents to be exposed to school in a non-threatening way which can lead to them becoming more willing to volunteer.

Let's face it, most parents are out of their "comfort zone" when it comes to the school building, or community involvement committees. To say "yes" on a form is hard to do, especially when the parent doesn't feel trained to do the task. It is our job as PTA leaders to find ways to get to know and communicate with our membership on a more personal level. Parent Education can offer that opportunity, especially for members we don't already know.

Setting up an environment that invites the membership into the school for a designated topic at a designated time and place may be the first point of contact for some parents. They are drawn to the topic or idea and feel welcome at the school. This can be a great springboard for getting parents into the building and introduced to PTA.

If the topic is presented by the administration of the school, it provides an opportunity to get to know them better and allows parents to hear and ask questions about "school lingo" making everyone more comfortable in the school setting.

The true test is how well we, as PTA leaders, step out of our own comfort zone and reach out to greet new parents. In the course of a question and answer session during a Parent Education event, listen to the interests the parents are expressing. Once you connect with a new parent and learn their interests, you can help them find ways to be involved with PTA that would be good for both that parent and your school. Thinking of ways to fit those parents into the PTA where they feel valued and useful is the ultimate test for the PTA leader. It is absolutely imperative in order to have a strong, viable PTA unit.

It is up to us to ask and encourage all parents to participate. Parent Education events are a wonderful opportunity to bring a broad range of parents into our schools. We all know that once a parent is engaged and feels confident in the school setting, they can share the satisfaction we get from doing something meaningful and useful for someone else. Especially when it benefits a child.

— Jan Ammons, 2nd Vice President

✧ ✧ Area News ✧ ✧

How do you get parents involved at your school? Our Area VPs asked their schools about parent involvement programs. Here they share some of the successful programs -- look for ideas you can use.

Southern Area

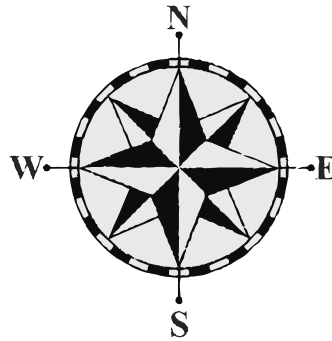
Boxtops for Education

"Boxtops for Education" has been growing stronger over the past few years. It is a simple program to run, yet provides a wonderful way for lots of parents to be involved and feel they are contributing to the success of their school.

Communication to parents is vital to the success of this program. Most schools send home a letter at the beginning of the year explaining the Boxtops for Education program and ask families to "clip and collect." Many also direct parents to the program's website address where they can learn about other ways schools can earn cash (applying for a VISA and shopping at the Boxtops Marketplace online).

For some parents, Boxtops is the extent of their participation. Our schools felt that without it their PTAs would not have been able to purchase things like playground equipment, PE gym mats, an art kiln, or a new activity sign for the outside of the school (one that announces the upcoming activities of the school and the PTA).

There are other ways to promote Boxtops for Education. Many of our schools hold a "contest" in which classes compete to see which class per grade level or school collects the most boxtops. The contests are promoted by flyers, morning announcements, articles in the PTA newsletter, and some schools even have a "Boxtops Bulletin Board." Since students get excited about the contests, they help promote the program to their families. Each class has a collection envelope or



box (a participating brand name box, i.e. Cheerios, Betty Crocker cake mix). Results are posted on the bulletin board and announced during afternoon announcements.

Parent volunteers in our schools not only collect, clip, and count the boxtops, they also help in the preparation of the "prizes" — pizza parties, cupcake/cookie parties, etc. They also help change bulletin boards to reflect the new month's theme, distribute contest flyers to teacher mailboxes, and take pictures of the winning classes for display.

One of our schools invites parents to "Clip, Count & Coffee" meetings. These are held a few times each year so that the boxtops can be counted and bundled. It is a great way for parents to socialize in an informal setting and help the school at the same time. Some schools even pass out scissors and boxtops at their monthly Board meetings so everyone can help "clip" while attending to PTA business.

Though the boxtops program can be handled by one person, it is much more fun to work with a small group of volunteers. Each person may only do one small thing, but that lessens the burden on someone else. By working together, parents in our part of the county help to make the Boxtops

Northern Area

School-Family Contract

Wildwood Forest Elementary recognizes that excellent schools have highly involved parents, and the school is proactive in getting parents involved. At the beginning of each year, each family is encouraged to commit 75 hours (fondly referred to as "sweat equity" by our principal, Kevin Hill) to their child's education by signing the School Family Contract.

This contract can be fulfilled by time spent together doing homework, volunteering in the classroom or school, going on a field trip with the class, or attending a school function such as a PTA meeting. Any involvement is counted towards this commitment!

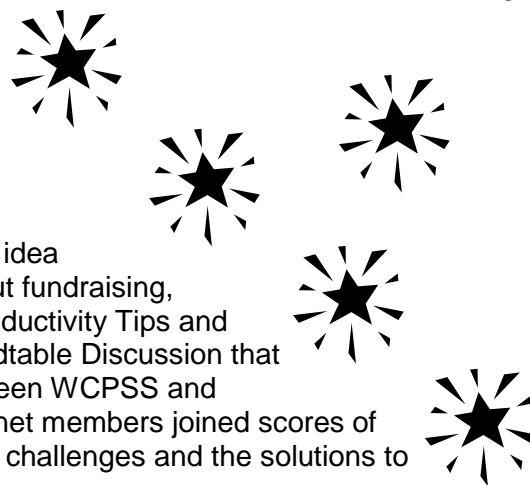
Last year, the contract was signed by the parents of 800 students and logged 10,322 volunteer hours. This year, 88% of the 560 families at Wildwood Forest signed the contract.

At the end of the year, the teachers and staff throw a big party to honor all those who fulfilled their contract. Last year was a western theme, the year before was a luau. It is great fun for the whole family, and there is quite a sense of community and accomplishment when everyone comes together to celebrate.

Peggy Houser
PTA President
Wildwood Forest

Elementary

Great Expectations Met!



For the more than 350 PTA leaders who attended the PTA Leadership Conference on Tuesday, October 1st, expectations were not only met, but they were exceeded!

Daniels Middle School was filled with enthusiastic, willing to learn, idea swapping PTA leaders who spent time in workshops learning about fundraising, volunteer management, Reflections, the awards process, PTA Productivity Tips and much more. A highlight of the conference was a President's Roundtable Discussion that focused on the role of the PTA in improving communications between WCPSS and parents. Seven school board members and thirteen WCPSS Cabinet members joined scores of PTA Presidents, President-Elects, and principals in discussing the challenges and the solutions to this opportunity.

The conference was kicked off with a Full Council PTA meeting and keynote address from Superintendent Bill McNeal. Bill's comments regarding the success of the Wake County Public School System, especially in comparison to other school systems in North Carolina, received a standing ovation.

Ideas are already flowing for next year's conference. A "middle school/high school" track of workshops, a wider selection of workshops, earlier promotion and better parking! If you have any thoughts or ideas, please send them to Virginia Parker at parkervg@earthlink.net and they will be forwarded to next year's committee.

A special thank you goes out to the Leadership Conference Committee for their hard work in putting on such a successful conference! Ann Rollins, Anne Sherron, Jill Touchberry, Becky Brady, Toni Cooper, Vermelle Wilson, Liza Weidle and Virginia Parker - a standing ovation to each of you for a job well done!

PARENTS AS PARTNERS IN CHARACTER-BUILDING

Parents are the first and most important moral educators of their children. PTA's should make every effort to communicate with parents about the school's goals and activities regarding character development – and how families can help.

Here are some tips on including parents as partners in character education:

- *Help parents understand how character is formed - by what children see, what they hear, and what they are repeatedly led to do.
- *Put ideas and materials into parents' hands - such as the monthly "Character Corner" posted on the Wake County PTA listserve.
- *Involve parents on your PTA's/school's planning committee for character education.
- *Start a resource center with the WCPSS "Character Tool Kit" as a launchpad.
- *Help parents understand and support the school's discipline policy and know how it fits into the overall character effort.

Online character education resources: www.NCcharacter.org and www.character.org

Information compiled from the resources of the North Carolina Center for Character Education and Character Education Partnership. For more information on the WCPSS character education traits, contact Wake County PTA Council member Liza Weidle familyfilter@nc.rr.com

Kids Voting: Only Happens with Parents Helping!

Thank you to all units who responded to the call for Kids Voting Precinct Captains for the November 5 election.

AB Combs Elementary PTA
 AV Baucom PTA
 Baileywick Elementary PTA
 Carroll Middle PTA
 Cary Elementary PTA
 Davis Drive Elementary PTA
 Dillard Drive Elementary PTA
 Durant Road Elementary PTA
 E. Millbrook Middle PTA
 Farmington Woods Elementary PTA
 Fuller Elementary PTA
 Hilburn Drive Elementary PTA
 Jones Dairy Elementary PTA
 Knightdale Elementary PTA
 Ligon Middle PTA
 Lufkin Road Middle PTA
 Martin Middle PTA
 Oak Grove Elementary PTA
 Olive Chapel Elementary PTA
 Pleasant Union Elementary PTA
 Reedy Creek Elementary PTA
 Root Elementary PTA
 Stough Elementary PTA
 Vandora Springs Elementary PTA
 Washington Elementary PTA
 Wendell Elementary PTA
 Wilburn Elementary PTA

Apex Elementary PTA
 Aversboro Elementary PTA
 Briarcliff Elementary PTA
 Carver Elementary PTA
 Centennial Middle PTA
 Davis Drive Middle PTA
 Douglas Elementary PTA
 Durant Road Middle PTA
 E.C. Brooks Elementary PTA
 Fox Road Elementary PTA
 Holly Springs Elementary PTA
 Joyner Elementary PTA
 LeadMine Elementary PTA
 Lockhart Elementary PTA
 Lynn Road Elementary PTA
 North Ridge Elementary PTA
 Olds Elementary PTA
 Penny Road Elementary PTA
 Powell Elementary PTA
 Rolesville Elementary PTA
 Smith Elementary PTA
 Swift Creek Elementary PTA
 Wakefield Middle PTA
 Weatherstone Elementary PTA
 West Cary Middle PTA
 Wildwood Forest Elementary PTA
 York Elementary PTA

We hope that if you have not contacted us, this will be a friendly reminder — especially for those schools that have a precinct at your school. We still have over 50 sites that need to be adopted. This is a very worthwhile activity for your school and only takes a few hours of time on one day. It is easy, fun, and a great way to get involved with the community.

Thank you so much for all of your support! We are successful because of YOU! Please call the Kids Voting office at 833-1282 with any questions.

Wake County PTA
 Council
and
 The American
 Association
 of University Women
present

**Wake County
 Commissioner
 Candidates
 Forum**
Districts 1, 2, 3 and 7

Thursday, October 24, 2002
 7:00p.m.-9:00p.m.
 Martin Middle School
 Auditorium
 1701 Ridge Road, Raleigh

*For more information contact
 Wake County PTA Council at
 850-1635 or ptacouncil@wcpss.net.*

Directions: Take Capital Boulevard to Wade Avenue (I-40) exit. Follow Wade Avenue to Ridge Road. Turn right onto Ridge Road. The school is on the corner of Ridge Rd and Horton St. Entrance on Horton St.

OR

Take the I-440/Beltline to the Ridge Road exit. Continue down Ridge Road past Lake Boone Trail. The school is on the corner of Ridge Rd and Horton St. Entrance on Horton St.

The National PTA has a wealth of information and resources, everything needed to create successful parent involvement programs — from planning to evaluation. Here is just a sample of what you can find in the members' section of www.pta.org.

Parent and Family Involvement and Student Success

- When parents are involved, students achieve more, regardless of socio-economic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents' education level.
- The more extensive the parent involvement, the higher the student achievement.
- When parents are involved in their students' education, those students have higher grades and test scores, better attendance, and complete homework more consistently.
- When parents are involved, students exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior.
- Students whose parents are involved in their lives have higher graduation rates and greater enrollment rates in post-secondary education.
- Different types of parent/family involvement produce different gains. To have long-lasting gains for students, parent involvement activities must be well-planned, inclusive, and comprehensive.
- Educators hold higher expectations of students whose parents collaborate with the teacher. They also hold higher opinions of those parents.
- In programs that are designed to involve parents in full partnerships, student achievement for disadvantaged children not only improves, it can reach levels that are standard for middle-class children. In addition, the children who are farthest behind make the greatest gains.
- Children from diverse cultural backgrounds tend to do better when parents and professionals collaborate to bridge the gap between the culture at home and the learning institution.
- Student behaviors, such as alcohol use, violence, and antisocial behavior decrease as parent involvement increases.
- Students are more likely to fall behind in academic performance if their parents do not participate in school events, develop a working relationship with their child's educators, or keep up with what is happening in their child's school.
- The benefits of involving parents are not confined to the early years; there are significant gains at all ages and grade levels.
- Junior and senior high school students whose parents remain involved, make better transitions, maintain the quality of their work, and develop realistic plans for their future. Students whose parents are not involved, on the other hand, are more likely to drop out of school.
- The most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family is able to (1) create a home environment that encourages learning; (2) communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for their children's achievement and future careers; and (3) become involved in their children's education at school and in the community.

The evidence is now beyond dispute. When parents are involved in their children's education at home their children do better in school.

—Henderson and Berla

2002—2003 Phoebe Apperson Hearst-National PTA Excellence in Education Partnership Award

HAS YOUR LOCAL PTA

provided parent and family involvement programs that encourage student success?

HAS YOUR LOCAL PTA

developed or strengthened these programs through collaborative efforts with other groups?

WOULD YOUR LOCAL PTA

like to receive national recognition for its outstanding achievements?

YES??? THEN NOMINATE YOUR PTA

for an award created by National PTA to honor a local PTA that demonstrates superior commitment to parent/family involvement and education partnerships.

The Phoebe Apperson Hearst-National PTA Excellence in Education Partnership Award recognizes PTAs whose collaborative efforts with parents, families, educators, and community members promote parent/family involvement with ongoing programs that encourage student success.

BENEFITS OF THE AWARD

1. A cash award of \$2,000 for use in a PTA program that promotes parent involvement
2. Two expense-paid trips to the National PTA convention (one for the PTA president or designee and one for a representative of the collaborative group)
3. Participation in national convention activities
4. A mention in National PTA publications

The winning PTA will be recognized at the 2003 National PTA Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Applications are available through your state office or on the National PTA web site at www.pta.org. Contact your state PTA or National PTA headquarters at (800) 307-4782 or info@pta.org for further information.

Defining Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is defined as the participation of parents in every facet of children's education and development from birth to adulthood. Parent involvement takes many forms, including:

- Engaging in two-way communication between home and school
- Serving as children's primary educators, integral to their learning
- Participating in volunteer work
- Sharing responsibility in decision making about children's education, health, and well-being

One of the underlying beliefs in parent involvement is that we cannot look at the school and home in isolation from one another. We must see how they connect with each other and with the world-at-large. There are several other fundamental beliefs that underlie any successful parent involvement program. These beliefs include the following:

- Parents want what is best for their children.
- Parents can be a key resource in their children's education.
- All children can learn, and the focus of everyone's efforts needs to be on children's success.
- Together, teachers, principals, families, and communities can succeed in educating children and preparing them to lead healthy, happy, and productive lives.

To reflect and embrace these beliefs, and to ensure the quality of schools as institutions serving the community, schoolteachers and principals need to recognize that parents must not only be involved in their children's learning at home, but also must be involved at all levels in the school, including governance and decision making.

—excerpted from "Including All in Parent Involvement: Practical solutions to common barriers," National PTA at www.pta.org.