

Greetings,

*On behalf of your newly elected State Board of Directors, our committed office staff and all of our dedicated Committee Members who support our overall initiatives, welcome to another new school year.*

*Summertime is best spent being reenergized by enjoying time with your family and friends and perhaps an all too brief vacation or two. It is also an excellent time for planning and implementing your strategies to achieve your goals and objectives in a less hurried environment. I would also suggest that summer is an excellent time to reflect on why we volunteer at our schools, why we support so vigorously the initiatives we passed, why we work tirelessly with our neighbors and friends to provide the best enrichment programming and why each of us stands steadfast to defend our human and fiscal school resources notwithstanding economic pressures and political influences both locally and nationally.*

*Like perhaps many of you, my first experience with PTA began with my son entering Kindergarten. A member of the Board handed all of the new volunteers a bookmark highlighting an often told story that was adapted from "The Star Thrower" by the author Loren C. Easley.*

#### *The Starfish Story*

*A young girl was walking along a beach upon which thousands of starfish had been washed up during a terrible storm. When she came to each starfish, she would pick it up and throw it back into the ocean. People watched her with amusement.*

*She had been doing this for some time when a man approached her and said, "Little girl, why are you doing this? Look at this beach! You can't save all these starfish. You can't begin to make a difference!"*

*The girl seemed crushed, suddenly deflated. But after a few moments, she bent down, picked up another starfish, and hurled it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she looked up at the man and replied,*

*Well, I made a difference to that one!"*

*"The old man looked at the girl inquisitively and thought about what she had done and said. Inspired, he joined the little girl in throwing starfish back into the sea. Soon others joined, and all the starfish were saved.*

*Perseverance against great odds and against the criticism of others is the very hallmark of value-based idealism as is refusing to accept failure. The understanding that we hold in our hands the power to change a life, a mind or a circumstance today - right now - is a powerful insight and motivator. At the same time, idealistic acts, even highly symbolic ones, have the power to inspire others to act and sometimes in numbers significant enough to make a major or even a complete impact on the problem at hand. Perhaps most inspiring of all is to witness the idealistic power of children and young people in action. The idealism of youth is a powerful force for leading change in the world. Often it is our youth who put into action values that we have instilled in them but have failed to act on ourselves. The world, therefore, depends on the idealism of youth to lead the way.*

*Please remember this brief parable as we begin this new year to promote the well being of "all" of our children inclusive of diversity and ability. This bond between our educators, parents and the greater involved community will secure and inspire our united efforts on behalf of all of our youth. Remember, every child, one voice.*

*Sincerely,*

*Jim Accomando*

*State President of CT PTSA*

# The National PTA Official Back to School Kit—Register Today!

## 2011–2012 Official PTA Back to School Kit FAQs

ONE PER PTA/PTSA UNIT

### The 2011–2012 Official PTA Kit is Standing by for you

The National PTA Official Back to School Kit contains resources to help PTA leaders serve their communities and run their local units: easy-to-use primers for the president, treasurer, membership chair and programs chair; membership and marketing tools; program and advocacy resources, and special offers from national partners.

Make sure your PTA gets these valuable resources. Register to receive your free 2011–2012 kit at [PTA.org/Official Kit](http://PTA.org/Official Kit).

All local PTAs must register to receive their kit for 2011-2012. The incoming 2011-2012 PTA president or other authorized leader will need to specify the unit's preferred shipping address and date. Kits will ship weekly starting July 1 through September 16, based on unit orders.

If you have any questions, please e-mail National PTA at [info@pta.org](mailto:info@pta.org) or call (800)307-4782 ext. 3098

Please note: The address units provide on the kit registration form will be used one time only, for the specific purpose of shipping the Official Back to School Kit. The form will clearly state this and will inform units that they must complete all change-of-officer/address paperwork for the State PTSA. The State PTSA will still need to update unit records with the National PTA office to ensure that units get National PTA's other valuable mailings throughout the year.

If you have any questions your CT PTSA at 203-281-6617

Or email us at [ab\\_connecticut.pta@snet.net](mailto:ab_connecticut.pta@snet.net)



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## HAVE YOU COMPLETED YOUR 990?

Every PTA/PTSA/SEPTA has to file a 990.

Do not put your unit in jeopardy of losing their tax-exempt status.

For all treasurers, refer to your money matters guide which comes in your back to school kit.

Questions, call our office at 203-281-6617 or email us at [connecticut.pta@snet.net](mailto:connecticut.pta@snet.net)

Sample Annual Report—

Fiscal Year \_\_\_\_\_ Date Prepared \_\_\_\_\_

Local PTA/PTSA /SEPTA Name \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

IRS Number \_\_\_\_\_

District and Council \_\_\_\_\_

**ACTUAL RECEIPTS**

**\*SEE NOTATION BELOW\***

Membership Dues (850 members at \$3.00*—local portion only).....	\$2,550
Fundraising (total gross income)..... (or any means used for making money)	3,300
Sponsorships.....	1,000
Balance Brought Forward from Previous Year.....	550
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS.....</b>	<b>\$7,400</b>

**ACTUAL EXPENDITURES**

Leadership Development.....	\$1,200
Membership Promotion.....	530
Programs.....	850
Reflections.....	420
District/Council Conferences.....	300
State PTSA and National PTA Conventions.....	500
Newsletter and Publicity.....	185
Bulletins/ <i>Our Children</i> .....	200
Officers' Reimbursement (telephone, tolls, stamps, etc.).....	180
Chair's Reimbursement (telephone, tolls, stamps, etc.).....	150
Past President's Pin.....	40
Council Dues.....	50
Scholarship.....	200
Bonding/Liability Insurance.....	300
Supplies.....	150
Mailing Permit.....	60
Postage.....	375
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES.....</b>	<b>\$5,690</b>
<b>Amount Remaining for Next Year.....</b>	<b>\$1,710</b>

**RECEIPTS NOT BELONGING TO LOCAL PTA**

State and National PTA Dues (850 members at *\$3.00).....	\$2,550
Founders Day Gift.....	50
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$2,600</b>

**DISBURSEMENT OF MONIES NOT BELONGING TO LOCAL PTA**

Dues sent to state PTA office.....	\$2,550
Founders Day Gift sent.....	50
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$2,600</b>

(The annual report should be sent to the state PTSA office every year either by email, fax or mail)

**THIS IS A SAMPLE ONLY. CT PTSA STATE AND NATIONAL FEES ARE \$5.50 PER PAID MEMBER**

# PTA<sup>®</sup> Reflections unleashes your artistic talents

Dance Choreography

Photography

Film Production

Musical Composition

Literature

Visual Arts

2011-2012 THEME– “DIVERSITY MEANS”  
FORMS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE– [www.ctpta.org](http://www.ctpta.org)  
ENTRIES TO CT PTSA OFFICE BY FRIDAY, JANUARY 20, 2012

Connecticut  
**PTSA**

National Media Sponsor of PTA Reflections Program

parenting  
school years



PTA REFLECTIONS



**Just Between Friends – Communicate. Manage Membership. Earn Revenue.**

Just Between Friends is available to all units in our state **free of charge!** Take advantage of the opportunity to use this online system to grow and strengthen your PTA/PTSA. With Just Between Friends, you can communicate with your entire school community, manage membership, create paper or online directories, earn non-dues revenue and manage volunteers – all on a private, secure system. You can read Just Between Friends strict privacy policy by visiting [www.JustBetweenFriends.com](http://www.JustBetweenFriends.com).

It's easy to enter members into Just Between Friends. There are three methods: member self-entry, individual manual entry, and spreadsheet upload. Once your members are entered, it's time to begin communicating with them. Just Between Friends has an email template library for you to choose from. When sending emails, you can attach files of the most popular formats. And when you send notices or deadlines, the system will send automatic reminders – **all at no cost to your unit!**

Parents will want to join your communications group in Just Between Friends to keep informed about what's happening at your school. If parents have children in one or more schools that use Just Between Friends, they only need one household account to receive communications and see events and reminders posted to their start page and calendar from all of the other communication groups they've joined. This makes it so easy for parents to manage their family's schedule.

If you'd like a single sheet flyer to distribute to parents that presents the benefits to them of joining your communications group in Just Between Friends, please contact Fran Lytle [fran@mailjbf.com](mailto:fran@mailjbf.com).

Your unit will enjoy another great benefit when you use Just Between Friends for communications – **revenue share**. Please contact your PTA/PTSA Just Between Friends liaison to get all the details about revenue share (412-561-0500 x 1203).

If you're not using Just Between Friends, it's easy to get started. Visit [www.JustBetweenFriends.com/PTAquickstart](http://www.JustBetweenFriends.com/PTAquickstart) and enter your unit. If you have questions, click on **Contact Us** and a Just Between Friends Customer Support Representative will promptly help you.

Then, learn how to use the system by visiting [www.LearnJBF.com](http://www.LearnJBF.com). Here you'll find lots of "How-to" information. Plus, you'll see a training webinar schedule. Sign up for as many webinars as you'd like – it's a fun and easy way to learn how to use the system.

**Fran Lytle Just Between Friends** Director of Marketing – 412-561-0500 ext. 1005

**WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT JUST BETWEEN FRIENDS?  
JOIN US FOR A CONFERENCE CALL/WEBINAR AND LISTEN AND ASK QUESTIONS  
ON WHAT JUST BETWEEN FRIENDS CAN DO FOR YOUR PTA/PTSA/SEPTA.**

Wednesday, August 24, 6:30pm – 8:00 pm. You will need a computer and phone line. Please use your phone for questions and computer for viewing the webinar. Feedback from computers when speaking makes the webinar almost impossible to conduct. We appreciate your cooperation. To register for webinar visit our website at [www.ctpta.org](http://www.ctpta.org).

Please join my meeting.

<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/join/844463832>

Join the conference call:  
Dial +1 (646) 558-2102  
Access Code: 844-463-832

# Hot Topics

2011-2012

Adding more value to PTA

Hot Topics will be either a webinar or a conference call to help you better run your PTA/PTSA/SEPTA and to answer your questions. Each topic below will be offered 3 times a week. Pick the time that best suits your busy life. No need to leave your home! Schedule with times and dates will be posted on our website soon

Visit us at [www.ctpta.org](http://www.ctpta.org)

SEPTEMBER	REFLECTIONS – We will update you on the new rules or how to start your own programs.
OCTOBER	IRS 990's – We will update you on new tax rules and other IRS information.
NOVEMBER	RESOLUTIONS – Connecticut PTSA's resolutions and beliefs are what drive our Association. They set the direction of our Association and provide legislators and other educational leaders with our viewpoint on education and children related issues. Learn how to write a resolution.
JANUARY	LEGISLATIVE ISSUES – Update on the issues
FEBRUARY	NOMINATIONS/ELECTIONS
MARCH	REFERENDUM/VOTING/ENDORING CANDIDATES OR POSITIONS
APRIL	IMPORTANCE OF PTA DOCUMENTS
MAY	CLOSING OUT YOUR YEAR

## FROM: Melinda Saller, VP Membership

As we begin the New Year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the contributions you have made to PTA/PTSA/SEPTA and its successes. The number one priority for parents is their children's well-being. With more than 30 years worth of research, it is proven that children do better when their families are involved both at home and in school. Additionally, grades and test scores climb, self-esteem grows and schools improve. Involved families understand the challenges schools face and become part of the solution. Shrinking budgets, curriculum cuts, increased class sizes and government mandates make delivering a high quality education a daunting task.

As you continue your membership campaigns, please remember to share your PTA's/PTSA's/SEPTA's accomplishments with your school families. Communication is so important. Let them know that it was your PTA /PTSA/SEPTA that sponsored the book fairs, funded the after school programs, or put together the yearbook. Many families assume it was the school, or the board of education that funded the enrichment programs. Show them that we need their membership and support to accomplish our goals.

I would also ask you to please do the same for your PTA Nationally. Many people take for granted much of what the PTA has accomplished throughout its history. To some, it seems like we've always had the rules and regulations to protect and provide for our children's well-being and educational needs. Please remind your families that the PTA is one of the largest children's' advocacy groups in the country and that thanks to PTA, our nation has:

- Child labor laws to protect against unsafe working practices and conditions:
- Federally funded hot-lunches, that feed 26 million children a day in our public schools.
- Labels on music recordings to alert parents to the presence of "explicit lyrics"
- 3.5 million children attending a kindergarten program as a part of our public schools today.

I will continue to send you PTA/PTSA/SEPTA accomplishments and information through emails that I hope you will share with all of your school families so that they can see why the PTA is so important. Additionally, parents should be informed as to how their membership fees are being spent to benefit their children. This may help parents to better understand the importance of a PTA, as compared to a Pto.

As we celebrate over 100 years of PTA history, we would like to honor our past, and renew our commitment for the future. As a PTA/PTSA/SEPTA leader, you carry the same passion and dedication that our founders had in making sure all children have a chance to succeed in school and in life. CT PTSA is a great resource for information. Please don't hesitate to call the Hamden office should you need anything at all.

I look forward to meeting you all and hope you have a great new year!



# The Membership Chair

The membership chair is responsible for facilitating the work of the membership committee and ensuring timely, accurate communication with other PTA committees and officers. The membership chair and committee should develop a membership growth plan to direct the activities of the committee. This plan should include membership recruitment and retention strategies that will lead to overall membership growth.

Other responsibilities of the chair may include:

- Attending scheduled meetings
- Recruiting a membership committee
- Leading the membership committee in recruitment efforts
- Working with the state membership chair to reach membership goals
- Administering the distribution of membership cards to local members
- Collecting and processing fees
- Sending fees and remittance forms to the council/state PTSA on a regular basis
- Maintaining accurate membership records and relevant information on the committee's work
- Attending leadership and membership training whenever possible

# The Membership Committee

The goal of the membership committee is to build an informed, active membership that supports the mission, objectives, policies and programs of the local, state and National PTA. Under the direction of the membership chair, the committee should develop a membership recruitment and retention plan that emphasizes a year-round effort to involve new members. Well-thought-out committee plans, made early and carried out with enthusiasm and imagination throughout the year, will contribute much to the success of membership development.

- **Size.** Most membership committees have five to 10 members. The optimum size of the committee will vary, depending on the needs of the local PTA.
- **Composition.** A local PTA membership committee should include parents, teachers, and the school principal.

# 10 Tips for Recruiting More PTA Members

**1. Assemble a creative membership outreach team.** Put together an outreach team that will be responsible for identifying potential new members in your community. While the entire PTA should be ready and willing to ask others to join PTA, let your outreach team lead the way.

Ask a PTA board member, a teacher and one male and one female PTA member to join your membership chair to become the outreach team. Ask that team to identify one or two main sources of new members and to help your unit reach out to that group. Will it be dads this year? Teachers? Or how about high school seniors who make great volunteers as well as members?

As you build your outreach team, search for people who have experience in marketing, advertising, public relations, sales, extension or strategic planning. With such people on board, you will be able to draw on a wide variety of talents and develop a strong recruitment plan.

**2. Develop a network.** Think about your community as a recruitment network. Develop a list of local businesses and organizations you interact with on a regular basis. Contact them to talk about ways your PTA could partner with them.

Create a “business member” category in your bylaws: A business can pay a special dues rate to become a member of your PTA. Allow the business member to choose one person to represent the business and vote in your PTA. In addition, allow the business member to place in the business’s window a decal or banner that says “Proud Supporter of \_\_\_\_\_ PTA.”

Ask business members to provide a speaker for a meeting or to host or sponsor an event. A representative from a local bank could give a seminar on saving for college. The local police department could talk about Internet safety.

Post PTA member sign-up sheets at local businesses to increase your outreach in the community. Ask the local grocery store to print a message about joining PTA on the cash register receipt.

**3. Seek opportunities for PTA members to speak at community events.** Visibility is an important part of membership recruitment. Be aggressive in identifying opportunities for PTA members to speak at community events. Within your PTA you likely have people who can speak about parent involvement, children’s health and wellness, how to run an effective meeting and more.

Gather a group of members who love to present workshops or training sessions. Host a “picnic in the park” series over the lunch hour during the summer and highlight topics of interest to the community. Develop sessions on such topics as grassroots advocacy, effective involvement in the school and finding quality after-school care.

Encourage members to join the local Toastmasters group. As members work on improving their public speaking skills, they can also network and promote involvement in PTA.

**4. Promote your PTA/PTSA.** Don’t be afraid to “sell” your PTA and ask everyone in the community to join.

Create a flier that tells potential members three things your PTA accomplished last year, three things your PTA hopes to accomplish this year and three ways PTA helps your community and its children. Put the flier out at all school events, ask local businesses to post the flier in their stores, have the local supermarket stuff the flier into shoppers’ bags, and ask the library to place one in each borrowed book.

As part of your membership drive, ask the school to place a TV/DVD player in the school lobby and run PTA public service announcements (PSA’s) in a loop (continuously) during student drop-off and pickup and Back-to-School events.

Don’t forget new students! New students join your school throughout the school year. Do you have a way for their parents to join PTA? Consider creating a “welcome to the neighborhood” package that includes a map of the area (identifying nearby libraries, stores, museums, and other areas of interest) and information about joining PTA. Add a volunteer interest survey and a list of upcoming activities to encourage parents to be involved.

**5. Work with the media.** Another method of informing a wide audience about your PTA’s activities is submitting news releases to newspapers, radio and television stations and other media that serve your community. Publicize your major events, and always invite people to join you for your next meeting. Provide your Web address or other contact information so potential members can contact you. Remember that newspaper advertisements, messages in church or community bulletins and letters to the editor can also help create interest in your PTA.

Call your local paper and get the name of the individual who reports on school happenings and/or educational issues. Invite that reporter to your events and send him/her press a release prior to any event that involves performers assemblies, and children.

If your school or community has a local cable access channel, ask the cable distributor to run PTA Public Service Announcements. Contact the local cable company to find out how to run Public Service Announcements.

**6. Use personal contacts.** Look around at your friends, family members, neighbors and co-workers, as well as the members of other organizations in which you are involved. These are all potential partners in PTA work.

Ask your PTA board members to create a list of community and organization leaders they know. Invite these leaders to a PTA event, such as an assembly, an ice cream social or a field day and show them what value your PTA provides to the school and community. Reaching out to these contacts could garner new members or even lead to the development of joint projects.

Ask your spouse, a parent or another important person in your life to join PTA. PTA is your passion; don't be afraid to share that with others who are close to you. Anyone who is concerned with the well-being of children should join and be active in PTA.

**7. Take advantage of PTA resources.** As part of a network of more than 23,000 PTA's, you have access to great resources.

Customizable posters, brochures, letters, fliers, and advertisements are available online at [PTA.org/Marketing](http://PTA.org/Marketing). Local unit presidents and membership chairs can use these resources to enhance membership recruitment and retention.

Share your success stories with other PTA members, or read about their successful events. The "PTA Great Idea Bank" connects you to members across the nation. Visit [PTAgreatideabank.org](http://PTAgreatideabank.org) to share ideas about building family-school partnerships, keeping kids safe and healthy, boosting male involvement and more.

**8. Enlist the help of a local celebrity.** Find a famous person in your town—every community has one—and ask him or her to be a spokesperson for your PTA. Ask him or her to serve as an Ambassador for Youth, to speak on behalf of your unit and encourage parents to get involved.

Ask the local television sports anchor or radio personality to represent your PTA. In addition to emceeding an event or serving as auctioneer at your next dessert auction, he or she can promote involvement with your PTA while doing his or her job.

Ask the mayor to officially declare September as PTA Membership Month or to designate an official PTA Week in your city or town. Partnering with the local government not only increases your visibility but also increases your credibility and shows your willingness to be involved in the community.

**9. Increase activities, not meetings.** Remember that less is more—at least when it comes to meetings! Increase participation by having *fewer* meetings and *more* events. Meetings to vote and discuss business are necessary but keep those short and to the point. Hold meetings when actual business decisions need to be made and let members know in advance what you will be voting on.

Make your next meeting an event by inviting a guest speaker to talk about a topic important to parents. Host a family event such as a movie night or game night. Organize a panel discussion on topics that are "hot" in the district; if possible, include children in the discussion.

Set a time limit of 15 or 20 minutes for meetings. Make sure people have information prior to the meeting so that when decisions need to be made, it won't take up as much time. Use any additional time for a social event, fundraiser or activity with children.

**10. Just ask!** Once people have expressed an interest in PTA, contact them right away so you can give them more information, find out about their interests and invite them to participate. Make it personal, phone calls and personal visits will result in more members for your PTA. Most importantly, just ask! A PTA survey showed that the number one reason people don't join PTA is that they were never asked to join. Think about the great work you would be able to achieve if everyone in your PTA asked just one additional person to join.

# Keys to a Successful Membership Campaign

Membership growth is a sign that your PTA is a vital and relevant organization that is making a difference in your community. If your PTA is an effective, respected, and fun association, people will be eager to join.

## Lay the groundwork for success:

Ask your PTA board to explain to potential members what your PTA does for the children of your community.

Determine whether your PTA is meeting the needs of your members and community.

Make sure you have the support of your principal and school staff.

## Make preparations before school starts:

Set a goal for membership for the year—challenge yourself!

Find out how your treasurer would like to handle the collection and deposit of membership fees.

Prepare membership forms, take-home fliers and promotional signs.

Send letters to last year's members asking them to join again.

Make sure the memberships of PTA board members are current.

Plan a special invitation to join, as well as a follow-up thank-you, for school staff. School staff can be great allies in encouraging parent participation.

## Take advantage of Back-to-School enthusiasm:

Send membership forms and fliers home with first day packets.

Have a membership table at all orientation and Back-to-School events.

Design a visual representation of your growing membership (e.g., a cardboard or illustrated tree to which leaves with new-member names can be added, a jar to which beans, marbles or ping pong balls can be added) for display in your school.

Ask people to join your PTA—don't wait for them to offer.

Make it easy for people to join. Have all the sign-up materials close at hand.

## Reenergize your efforts in the second semester:

Plan a second membership campaign for January to reach out to new families and to encourage all parents to make it their number one resolution to be more involved through PTA.

Take a look at your membership goal from the start of the school year. How close are you to reaching that goal? Set a goal for membership recruitment in January.

Check in with your treasurer about the collection and deposit of membership fees. Make sure the current procedures are working well.

Thank current PTA members for their commitment. Tell them why you're organizing a January Membership Campaign and how they can help make it a success.

Tell your school community about the new opportunities to get involved in the new year.

Send membership forms and fliers home with report cards and school reminders.

## Promote membership throughout the year:

Set up your membership table at every PTA and school event (maintain a current list of members in case people forget whether they have already joined).

Publish a list of PTA members in your newsletter.

Regularly include articles about membership and a clip-out membership form in your newsletter.

Publish your current membership count in your newsletter. Check it against your goal often.





# Connecticut PTSA

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National PTA Website: [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)

**\*\*\*COMING NEXT MONTH\*\*\***

**\*MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVE PROGRAM\***

**\*\*\*\*\*STAY TUNED\*\*\*\*\***



**Attention All Unit Presidents and Treasurers.....**

**FREE PRESIDENT AND TREASURER TRAINING**

**Monday, September 26**

**6:30pm**

**WOODROW WILSON MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**MIDDLETOWN, CT**

**Register online at [www.ctpta.org](http://www.ctpta.org)**

**Under training and events or email us at**

**[connecticut.pta@snet.net](mailto:connecticut.pta@snet.net)**